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ABSTRACT

The concept of recurrent re-socialization throughout a lifetime is discussed in relation to life-long education. The need for re-socialization, and thus renewal education through adult education, arises not only as a result of a change of physical environment but also at times of cultural shifts, critical periods, and commitment reductions. In a changing society, it is necessary that the adult individual be able to adapt through re-education and re-socialization. (DB)

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DISCUSSION DRAFT

"RECURRENT SOCIALIZATION"

A New View of "Adult" and "Education" in the Life-Long Education Concept

by

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Summary of a Discussion Draft

"RECURRENT SOCIALIZATION"
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New social environments not only impose readjustments and changes in habits and attitudes, but spark a tension--cognitive and affective stress--which may serve to modify and develop a person's interests, aims and self-image at late points in life. This is found to be true with persons of different ages and social backgrounds who come from one country to another. It is noted also to be true for people who move from rural to urban areas and find factory jobs. It is considered highly observable among people who move from one institution to another.

Adult education has, nevertheless, traditionally been thought of in terms of skills training or additional cultural transference. Much of adult education literature deals either with basic education, functional literacy, vocational training or with evening courses, external degrees, "great books" programs. Seldom, and only recently, has adult education touched on concerns of individual identity and notions of self-image as part of adult learning. Consequently, it is felt that an important role for adult education--that of re-socialization--has been ignored.

"Re-socialization" and what is conceived of as "regenerative education" are seen as taking place not only during physical mobility periods but more fundamentally at times of:

1) cultural shifts,

2) critical periods, and

3) commitment reductions.

Socialization is a major part of cultural transference and identity formulation. Re-socialization is considered to be a natural and important aspect of continuing education, with crucial importance to techniques of adult learning as well as to the idea and actuality of change.

Furthermore, re-socialization is thought to be repeatable, or <u>recurrent</u> throughout the life-span. This idea of recurrence is thought to have significant meaning for the notion of life-long education.

"RECURRENT SOCIALIZATION"
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I.

Socialization may recur throughout the life-span at peak periods brought on by life's upsets and/or opportunities. During such high points a new self-awareness may be provoked or encouraged that in turn may promote latent potential and new directions.

Life's crises, relational shifts and social environment changes may not only impose readjustments and changes in habits and attitudes, but create a tension--a cognitive and affective stress--which may serve to alter and develop a person's interests, aims and self-image. Conative desires may be sparked during these periods resulting in a shift in a person's sense of self, and, consequently, of purpose in life.

This thesis has major implications for thinking about education and supports the notion of life-long education. It is particularly relevant to the field of adult education. Traditionally, adult education has been thought of in terms of skills training or additional cultural transference. Much of adult education literature deals either with basic education, functional literacy, vocational training or with evening upgrading, "great books" programs, external degrees. Seldom, and only recently, has adult education touched on concerns of individual identity and notions of self-image as a part of adult learning. An important role for adult educators has been ignored.

This said, certain distinctions and sub-concepts must be made. Socialization--the fitting into or the training for a social environment--

is distinguishable into the following categories: primary, secondary and re-socialization.

Primary socialization is the first socialization a person undergoes, which takes place in childhood and prepares the person to become a member in the "inherited" society. Secondary socialization is the next stage of socialization during which a person adopts as his own the perceptions, metaphors and purposes of institutional or institution-based "subworlds" in the society [Berger and Luckmann, 1967]. Primary socialization is "the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it." It is inevitable. Secondary socialization is the specific adoption by an individual of the practices, relationships and "mentality" of an institution or group as a major, if not all-important, part of life. Certain rituals, or rites of passage, usually accompany the transition from primary to secondary socialization.

Re-socialization is a process in which allegiance, perceptions and habits are altered. It involves a change in personal and social identity and, consequently, a break with the past. Berger and Luckmann speak of re-socialization in terms of transformations, or alternations. (Successful alternation, they suggest, involves emphasis on social and conceptual conditions, with the social serving as the matrix of the conceptual.) Re-socialization is seen as having a reality-base which is the present whereas the reality-base of secondary socialization is the past.

Tangentially, it should be noted that the psychological foundations of the work of Adlerians, such as Victor Frankel, is that the purpose of psychoanalysis should be to wake the person up to his or her present and to the meaning of this present as a new beginning point. This is also an important notion in phenomenological thought.

Socialization, or re-socialization, may occur (and recur) throughout the life-span during certain transitional periods brought on by upset or

opportunity. These peak periods may come about as a result of a person's moving: (a) from a rural to an urban area, or vice-versa, (b) from one institution to another, and (c) from one country to another. More fundamentally, however, I believe that re-socialization may be accelerated, or stimulated, during:

(a) cultural shifts,
(b) critical periods,
(c) commitment reductions.

Cultural shifts usually bring about a new view of national identity, language orientation and even professional or job status. Critical periods often involve marked changes in social role and meaningful relationships. Commitment reductions may dislocate certain fixed "mind-sets" which then allow for new perspective and new learning.

Re-socialization is often highly noticeable among people who move from one institution to another. It appears to obtain also for people who move from rural to urban areas and acquire factory jobs [Inkeles, 1969]. I found it an important development in the lives of persons of different ages and social backgrounds who came from Latin America to the United States [Rivera, 1971]. (In this latter instance, re-socialization interfaces with "Americanization" and includes what is normally termed assimilation.) I have also determined that participation, inter alia, in "authentic dialogue," simulation games, "anthropological perspective" thinking, motivational techniques and futures-casting may serve in a process of re-socialization and aid in making the present be seen more explicitly and consciously.

II.

In theory and practice--except for Paulo Freire [1970], and the innumerable street politician-teachers throughout history who set out to arouse people to reflect and take action about their condition--adult educators have

generally accepted their role as transmitters of culture, information and skills. In a sense, union organizers, committed politicians and contemporaries like Ralph Nader and John Gardner, are adult educators in ways that cooperative extension agents, managerial training directors and ABE (Adult Basic Education) teachers are not. The latter accept, as it were, primary and secondary socialization as givens so that their purpose is to satisfy the client's need or desire for a particular goal or activity or for learning for its own sake.* Normally, it is assumed that once a person is over a certain age he or she is (a) trained for a social environment, (b) fitted with the necessary cultural values and behaviors, and (c) endowed with a unity and persistence of personality, that cannot be changed. Consequently, this adult can only be assisted (and, moreover, only desires) to develop a specific fund of information or a specialized skill.

Re-socialization, on the other hand, involves a concept of man and a view of society as continually capable of and actually undergoing change and growth. For some [Berger and Luckmann], the most important conceptual requirement for such alternation is "the availability of a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation." For others [Freire], alternation, or "liberation," may be brought about through "authentic dialogue" to generate critical thinking and provoke praxis.

From my own experiences, practice, observations, study and thought, I conclude simply that re-socialization, and what I conceive of as "regenerative education," is not only a significant means toward promoting alternation and growth potential in adult individuals but that it is crucial in a world whose most repeated theme, explicit objective and characteristic is change.

Moreover, I see now and can foresee to a greater extent in future re-socialization as almost imperatively recurrent--as the full potential of

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* See Houle [1961] for a typology of motivational orientation for adult education participants. See also Boshier [1971] for a factor analytic exploration of Houle's typology.

education to develop questive human beings (not just workers) is recognized for adults passing through life-stages or moving within, or between societies.

While men like Paulo Freire and Julius Nyerere [1967] talk about "liberation" and "self-reliance," others with different orientations, but similar concerns, like David C. McClelland [1961] or Marian R. Winterbottom [1957], talk of the relation of need for achievement to learning experiences in independence. As this relates to adults, implicit is the notion of "re-socialization" and, consequently, of the present as the most significant reality-base.

The perception inherent in this argument is that education may (and should aim to) be regenerative in nature and scope. The adult, therefore, is seen as a person capable of change and growth [Eriksen, 1950; McClusky, 1971; Peck, 1956]. This is in opposition to writers who see life as a process of initial increase, mid-point consolidation and then gradual decline [Buhler, 1936; Kuhlen, 1964]. Change is seen in terms of (1) the individual moving within or between frames--from one country or sector of society to another, and (2) the frame shifting in orientation--from traditional to industrial, or industrial to "post-industrial" society.

III.

It is interesting to note that adult education is regarded by some as a "panacea for interpersonal ills" and as "having therapeutic qualities" [Boshier, 1971]. Although I believe that this view is like looking out the minimizing end of the telescope, still it points up the fact that adult-education learning situations already involve adults at critical periods of their lives and may be of significant influence and importance.

While teaching English as an additional language to Latin Americans in Syracuse, New York, it became clear to me that re-socialization may be a

vital factor in developing the self-image of individuals and, by extension, of society. I saw that re-socialization could serve not only as a means toward helping a person adjust to a new situation which would then become fixed, but that it might become a recurrent, regenerative aspect of adult education. I also recognized that Paulo Freire's philosophy of liberation and David McClelland's conception of the achievement motive, though value-laden at opposing ideological poles, are both effective means of waking persons up to potential, to renewed realities. Futures-casting and simulation gaming may be equally powerful for this end. In particular, futures-casting is effective in bringing home the realization that the future is something we must seek if we are to affect it and, therefore, something towards which we must act.

High degrees of symmetry exist, as Berger and Luckmann point out, between objective and subjective reality and may influence self-image and subsequent direction. The what and how of re-socialization depend on values and goals. Where McClelland's achievement motive techniques aim to integrate the individual into the existing society with a view to promoting economic growth, Freire's "liberation" ideology aspires to freeing the individual from the models of his "oppressors" so that he may be free to promote a better society.*

Re-socialization is a matter of raising the level of consciousness through phenomenological learning. Empirical and reinforced learning techniques are only aids in promoting the development of the full potential of the individual within society--whether it be to maintain or to change that society.

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* The objective here is not to select between these ideologies. Personally, two of my concerns as an educator have been to promote each person's (as well as with own) development and facilitate his or her social integration. Nevertheless, within this attitude, I find considerable leeway to promote elements of "critical consciousness" which I consider vital to a clear view of society. Although I conclude that Freire's thesis and work are valid, I believe that evolutionary modification of "the system" is preferable to radical change unless the system in question is incapable of change via democratic processes. Furthermore, in my judgment, Freire's ideological (as distinguished from his educational) purpose is still more pertinent to Latin America than the United States.

The problem of promoting a renewed self-image with the adult lies in the fact that blocks of established self-image need to be broken off and a latent, or unsuspected, image developed. This will, in turn, create new orientations and new sets of actions, new responsibilities and new habits. There are certain psychological dangers involved in attempting to alter notions of self-image, but these will be minimized if certain areas of established self-image are brought into focus while support is provided for other areas.

Re-socialization, then, is seen as a developmental stage--psychologically and socially with, ultimately, economic consequences. The number of times that re-socialization recurs will depend, as stated at the beginning, on life's upsets or opportunities. What goes on at each stage will be the shift from an unconscious to a conscious self-image.

As societies become more mobile physically and professionally, periods of stress and transition will occur more often and greater opportunities will arise to heighten the consciousness of individuals who have become stagnant or fixed in their ideas, habits and responsibilities. This is not to insist that a person, at a higher consciousness level, might not become confirmed in his view and way of life. It does mean to suggest, however, that adult education must become more than a process involving the transfer of information and skills, more than a "peripheral" or "marginal" aspect of education. Re-socialization points to a new vitalization of the concept of education. Recurrent socialization emphasizes <u>adult</u> (not just worker) and <u>education</u> (not just training) in the life-long education concept.

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